

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Village of Sea Cliff Comprehensive Plan

Public Workshop 2

March 29, 2023, 7:00-9:00pm, St. Luke's Parish Hall



On Wednesday March 29, 2023, BFJ Planning facilitated the second Public Workshop for the Sea Cliff Village Comprehensive Plan. The event was held at St. Luke's Parish Hall. The workshop was attended by approximately 120 people including Village Trustees, the Steering Committee, and the public.

Erinn McDonnell, Steering Committee member and Village Grants Administrator, kicked off the meeting by welcoming the participants and acknowledging the Committee members in attendance. Mayor Elena Villafane, Esq. introduced the Comprehensive Plan process, the Steering Committee, and the consultant team.

Following, BFJ gave a presentation outlining preliminary recommendations and options for the Village to consider, next steps in the planning process, and instructions for the breakout table activity that followed.

Frank Fish, Principal of BFJ Planning, began the presentation by reintroducing the Village's Comprehensive Plan and team. This was followed by a review of the project timeline and outline of the Plan chapters. At the time of the second public workshop, the consultant team had conducted a kick-off meeting, two site visits, a public workshop, a public survey, a trustee meeting, five steering committee meetings, 13 stakeholder meetings, and completed eight draft chapters. Following the public workshop, Frank explained that there would be a committee hearing on May 11 at 6:00 PM at Village Hall and a Board of Trustees public hearing (date TBD), production of the plan draft and edits, and SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review) before the plan is adopted around September, 2023. Frank outlined the 12 chapters that will be a part of Sea Cliff's Comprehensive Plan, and let the audience know that the first eight draft chapters are available on the project website.

The consultant team members shared the preliminary recommendations for the plan chapters that have been completed to date.

Mark Freker, Senior Planner, BFJ Planning summarized the preliminary recommendations from the draft Transportation chapter.

Emily Junker, Planner, BFJ Planning shared Housing objectives and strategies the Village could consider to achieve them.

Silvia Del Fava, Associate, BFJ Planning reviewed preliminary recommendations for the Utilities and Community Facilities chapters.

Tina Lund, Principal, Urbanomics presented preliminary recommendations for the Business Districts and Economic Development chapter.

Frank wrapped up the presentation by reiterating that the consultant team is working to complete the remaining plan chapters in the coming months. Those chapters are Historic Preservation and Cultural and Scenic Resources; Natural Resources and the Environment; Sea Level Rise, Climate Change, and Stormwater Management; and the Future Land Use Plan and Implementation. Franks reviewed the next steps which are: the last committee meeting and public hearing; completion of draft chapters; draft plan transmitted to Trustees for comments and revisions; and the Trustees Public Hearing.

Next, Frank explained how the breakout table discussion would proceed. Participants were instructed to choose a table where groups of 8-12 participants and a representative of the consultant team or Steering Committee were present. Some tables were themed to focus some of the discussions on those specific topics. The themes were Land Use and Zoning, Transportation, Housing, Sustainability and the Environment, and Economic Development. Each table was tasked with taking notes and choosing someone to report back at the end of the 45-minute discussions. Discussions ensued for 45 minutes and any topic related to the plan was fair game at any of the tables. Following, a representative from each group was called up to present the key ideas that came out of their table's discussions.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE DISCUSSION BY THEME:

ZONING AND LAND USE

- Participants suggested that a zoning handbook for residents and business owners would help them to understand what to expect.
- There is a desire for transparency in rezoning process. Participants would like to know what a rezoning process looks like.
- There is an expressed need for more consistent standards in the code and guiding the ZBA.

General

- All changes should be in the interest of public safety.
- Participants want increased trust in the change, that the plan won't be overridden by rules passed by the state governor, and that the comprehensive plan is not a wasted effort.
- Desire to preserve what makes Sea Cliff unique.

TRANSPORTATION

- Public safety is a priority.
- Improve traffic flow.

Speeding

- Reduce speeding.
- There was an expressed need for different solutions to speeding on local road because signage is not working.
- Participants suggested creating actual physical barriers to deter drivers from speeding, such as speed bumps, crossing areas, and other techniques.
- Need for enforcement, flashing stop signs, speed warning signs to deter speeding.
- Need to advocate to the County to slow down traffic on Glen and Prospect.

Jurisdiction

- Desire to discuss more village roads in which the Village has jurisdiction. Are there opportunities for improvement, and if so, where? Not only Downing and Carpenter need attention.
- Use this Plan as a leverage point to put pressure onto the County and make sure road enhancements are pursued.
- Participants like when Sea Cliff Avenue is closed for outdoor dining and events and would like the County to allow the Village to do it more frequently.

Walkability

- There is a desire for safer walkability and biking.
- Making sure that walkability recommendations are in the Comp Plan so that the County can reference it.
- Different treatments are needed for different roads when it comes to walkability. There is support for prioritizing certain roads (e.g. Carpenter Avenue for sidewalks because it is critical link to schools) but also some opposition to requiring sidewalks residential streets.

Parking

- No Parking on Thursday signs in the Downtown are an issue.
- Redesign parking.

HOUSING

General Concerns

- Desire for diverse housing mix in the spirit, character and affordability of Sea Cliff.
- Encourage housing for the young and elderly.
- How can Sea Cliff Achieve affordable housing?

Concerns about effects of adding housing

- Think about the implications of new development (traffic impacts, school capacity, etc.) when adding housing and population.

- Issue with housing connecting to septic (this is also an issue for already existing homes and residents).

Questions about existing regulations and what regulations could affect occupancy

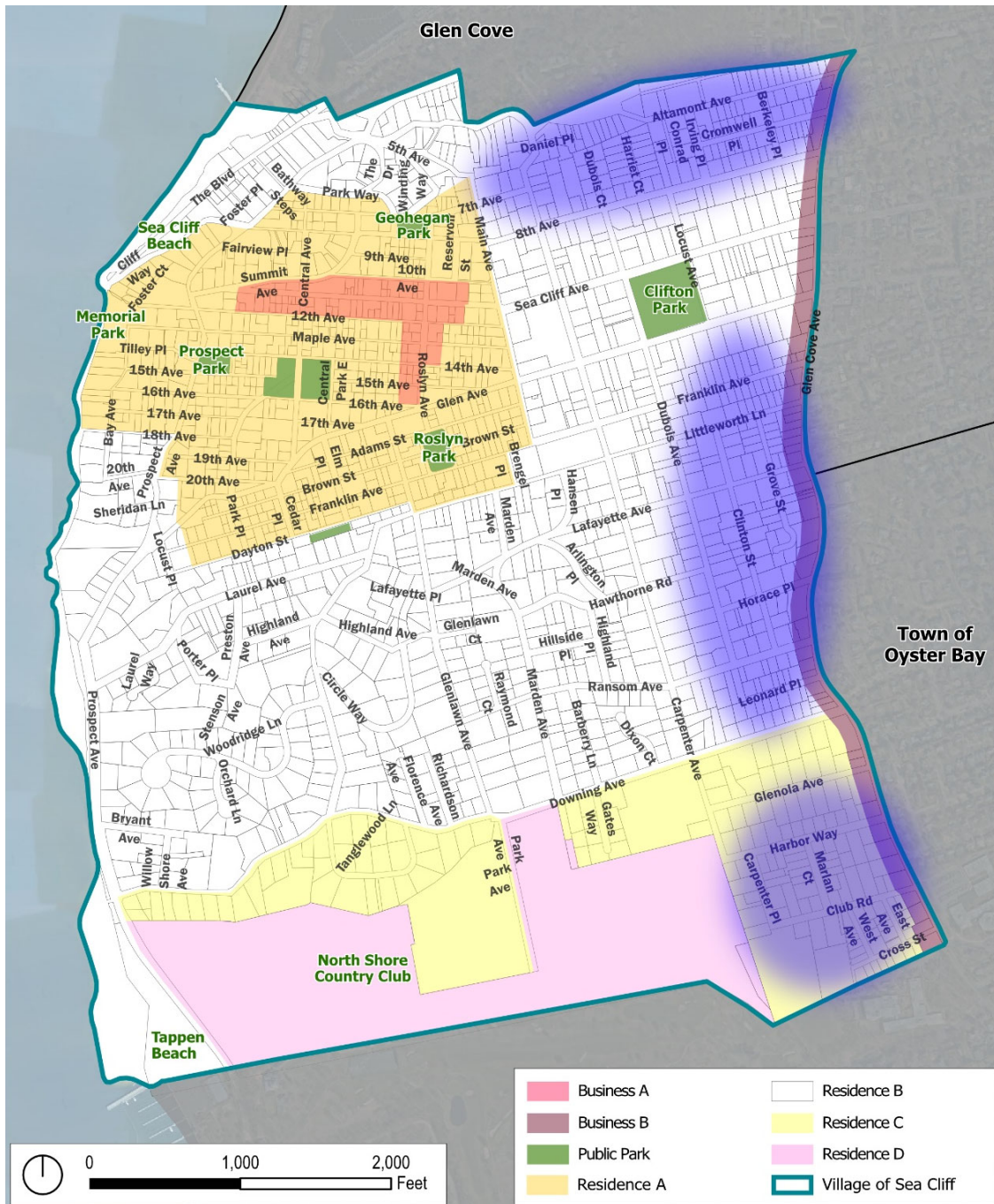
- Questions were raised about the existing rules for renting in the Village, restrictions on occupancy limits, maximum number of kitchens per unit, and family definition (these are not topics related to the Comp Plan).
- Would like ability to have non-familial people live together in a home. For example, 4 widows in a large single-family home.

ADUs

- General support for ADUs and affordable housing.
- ADUs are good for people who want their family nearby.
- What do ADUs mean in terms of other services (e.g. schools, parking, sewers)?
- Will ADUs add to tax base?
- ADUs would add to customer base for local businesses.

Zoning changes and lot size

- Support for minimum lot size changes in the zoning. It is currently a waste of time and resources for the zoning board.
- Everything is now non-conforming.
- Participants discussed potential new residential zone that capture the smaller lots adjacent to Glen Cove Avenue, now zoned Res B. Three areas were identified where people felt existing lots are too small to be in Res B (see schematic figure on the next page). What those could be changed to?
- Having people go to the ZBA opens up decisions for bias.
- There is an expressed need for consistency from the ZBA and Arch Review Board. Decisions seem arbitrary and sometimes are inconsistent with the neighborhood context.
- On some lots, participants said that front and back yards are both considered front yards. This needs clarification in the code.
- Participants do not want overdevelopment on small lots. They did not want to build higher than 3 stories.
- They want to retain some flexibility in the zoning.
- Revise Zoning to discourage expansion of existing homes to McMansions and knockdowns.



Areas to consider rezoning

Subdivision and North Shore County Club

- Need to beef up the subdivision regulations. What can Sea Cliff’s code do to direct development in a desirable way? (Other than just the conservation subdivision, how can Sea Cliff residents have a say in what services the developer needs to provide, how the units would look, etc.?)

Lot Size

- Support for conservation subdivision with smaller homes more in character with Sea Cliff. Smaller lots can also be more affordable. Best to concentrate housing – limit lot size and square footage of homes.
- There is also some support for larger lots and rezoning the Res D district to 2-acre minimum lots with a conservation subdivision. Oyster Bay is considering up zoning to 2 acres (current ½ acre).
- Problem is that if 1-acre zoning, this will be very expensive housing. Should require workforce housing in this case.

Planned Community, Vision

- Idea of a “planned community”, well designed and creative.
- Country Club should include a mix of housing types (apartments, townhomes, single-family houses) and designs, aligned with historic SC character, smaller lots, open space preserved. OK to have smaller lots.
- Want it to be creative, like the village, and not cookie cutter.
- A participant suggested looking at what is happening at the Engineers County Club as a Precedent. She said that she has looked at RXR’s design and was pleasantly surprised to find it is actually sensitive to the landscape. They have a clustered development with a smaller golf course. They have attractive units.
- Future Country Club plans could include senior housing.
- Consider whether to include 1-bedroom apartments.
- Avoid isolated enclave separate from the existing Village.

Concerns

- Any development there should preserve wetlands, preserve greenspace, and measure a buffer.
- Suggestion to purchase all or some of the North Shore County Club by the Village.
- What would be the impact of NYS governor’s housing proposal?
- Would this add 200 more kids in schools and what would be the impact?

Architectural Character

- Everyone wants to live in Sea Cliff because of the historic architecture. Even young people who are moving to the Village are restoring houses.
- Put teeth in the code to preserve historic and typical Sea Cliff homes (that is the reason we are here).
- The Architecture Review Board and Landmarks should understand that restoration has to be adaptive—not everything should be made to look old, but should be sensitive to the design and be creative. The boards should look at precedent examples elsewhere for adaptive designs.
- Would like the Architectural Review Board and Landmarks to work with property owners to educate them about what they could do with their property and to work with applicants.
- Zoning only allows for bland housing designs, it should be more flexible, architectural guidelines or form-based regulations could help. Sea Cliff is famous for the Victorians but also has several other important architectural styles including mid-century moderns. How can we encourage creative, attractive, and contextual architecture throughout the Village?
- Do not want the Village code to encourage knockdowns or the construction of mini-McMansions
- Support for historic district with architectural review guidelines.

- Can architecture review standards be tailored by neighborhood? Review should be based on the location and type of house.
- Opposite idea suggested to have the ARB only review Village core area to maintain the character.

Home Office Provision

- Interest in this idea and indication that participants are OK with the home office provision.

Glen Cove Avenue

- There is a concern about how adding apartments would affect the traffic on Glen Cove Avenue.
- Encourage smaller units for the young and old.
- Environmental concerns for water and parking.

UTILITIES

- Protect water quality, at any cost. Ensure the new water company does a good job).
- Encourage replacement of old septic systems with new. Take advantage of Nassau County funding.
- Idea about Village hazardous materials pick up once a week ("toxic Tuesdays" or "Hazmat Mondays"), instead of residents driving to the drop off site in the Town.
 - o Similar idea for yard waste pick-up
 - o Be a leader for all of Long Island
- Explore opportunities for solar on large buildings (e.g. DPW building) and parking lots.
- Suggestion for composting toilets.
- How can the Village, residents and businesses reduce and optimize waste?
- Community Compost: Support people who don't have the space but can bring their biodegradables and yard waste.

NATURAL RESOURCES, CLIMATE CHANGE, WATERFRONT

Water

- Protect Water (aquifer and Harbor) as priority
- Strong support to protect the health of the sound, water, and beach.
- The waterfront, harbor and sound are part of Sea Cliff's identity.
- Prevent contamination.
- Biofiltration and green infrastructure guidelines are needed in the code.
- Sustainability of the Aquifer. The aquifer is not appreciated. Need to do more to have people appreciate this valuable resource.
- Water is good now, but will it be in the future?
- Question/surprise about septic system beneficial for aquifer
- We need to think of Long Island as a geographic whole when considering the environment.

Coastal Erosion

- Do something to mitigate coastal erosion
- Erosion control, Plant trees in a way that prevent cliff erosion/landslides.
- Deal with derelict properties on the cliffs.
- Debris from erosion is falling onto the boardwalk. Ensure that the boardwalk will last more than 20 years.

- There are some property owners who have plans to raise the elevation/topology of their property. This should be reviewed by the Village.

Renewable Energy

- Support for solar options, for example in parking lots.

Plantings

- Restrict use of chemicals on lawns.
- Plant more native plants.
- Regulate tree topping.
- Gas leaf blowers produce excessive noise.
- Suggestion for a community green house.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

325 (water building)

- More access to the 325 property for recreation
- Desire for more access sooner and for events this spring and summer
- Seek more funding, grants, and gifts

Parks

- Retain all parks, do not allow them to be sold or developed.
- No more asphalt.
- Need for a 15-year plan for parklands.
- The Beautification Committee needs more younger people to be engaged and needs more volunteers in general. They have good initiatives but not sustained donations.
- Prioritize the maintenance of staircase (e.g. Sea cliff beach) and parks (Central Park is water logged).
- Issue of lack of maintenance for some parkland (e.g. Glen and Prospect Ave triangle).
- More native plants should be used in parks and no fertilizers.
- Hire a horticulturist.
- Suggestion for a dog park on a vacant property on Altamont street (location of the Village incinerator).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Improve communication between the Village and businesses

- Create a handbook on zoning for business and home owners to understand what they can do with their property. Or a "welcome new resident" booklet, information and promotion of local businesses with an explanation of codes or link to website. Have it clearly stated and easy to find on the village website. Improve the village website.
- "Change of use" permits need clarification. Many hurdles will prevent people from trying to start a business.
- How can new business' residents know about permits required?
- Create a business liaison, at least part time, to help and attract businesses. We need a business liaison that helps businesses through the process of zoning, permits, etc. Provide a checklist for when you are leasing or buying a new space.
- Create a Chamber of Commerce.
 - o Maybe with new volunteers or part of the village hall?

- Unsure what are the benefits to the Village and business owners but people keep assuming that the Village already has one. The Arts Council has taken on a lot of effort in creating events that promote local businesses and are ready to hand over the responsibility to the Village or other businesses.
- Keep up open communication on street closures/ construction/ movie sets.

Support Local Businesses

- Show support for small businesses through messaging in the newsletter, on the Village website, and other networks to say "support our businesses in town" or list all of them on the website. The website has a link that shows up when you have the cursor over 'about the village' that says "local business." When you click on it, nothing is there. Suggest a separate title or page to find out about and list local businesses.
- A sign reading "Village of Sea Cliff supports Small business."
- Include messaging in the comprehensive plan and meetings supporting local businesses and their choice to situate in Sea Cliff.
- Keep organizing events and invite all businesses to be part of them and promote them.
- Suggestion for a Sea Cliff branding effort.

General

- We need more foot traffic, more shops, and cute cafes to keep people in town. Vacancies and costs need to be right to provide space for those businesses.
- Future development and business development should promote community & the special character of Sea Cliff.
- How do we attract the businesses we want?
- Continue to include local businesses that do not have storefronts in organizing and promotion.

Sea Cliff Avenue Business District

- Sea Cliff Avenue closed to traffic for events and outdoor dining is great.
- We need luncheonettes and less offices as storefronts.
- Parking lot should not be closed Thursday morning and street parking Thursday morning since customers of stores don't have a place to park. Against "no parking" on Thursday nights.

Glen Cove Avenue Business District

- Want better design, not cookie cutter buildings, more variety of structures.
- Glen Cove Avenue should complement the rest of the Village.
- Widen sidewalks and add buffers to keep pedestrians safe.
- Need to emphasize intergovernmental cooperation to upgrade the Glen Cove Avenue Corridor on both sides.
- Bury power lines.
- Sea Cliff has a good sign ordinance, but it is not being enforced.
- Want visual continuity on Glen Cove Avenue.
- Glen Cove Ave scale: 3-story OK.
- Rethink height limits of mixed use.